



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION  
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**  
*Celebrating 31 Years of Advocacy & Achievement*

**DRAFT**

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November XX, 2015

**TO:** Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
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Supervisor Don Knabe

**FROM:** Dr. Sunny Kang, Chair  
Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

**RE:** LOS ANGELES COUNTY HEALTH AGENCY INTEGRATION  
ADVISORY BOARD

The Commission for Children and Families (Commission) urges the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) to expand the Los Angeles County Health Agency Integration Advisory Board to include the Commission as representation for vulnerable children and youth.

On August 11, 2015, the Board approved a motion establishing the Los Angeles County Health Agency, which will be an integration of the operations of the Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Department of Public Health (DPH). This motion also included the establishment of a temporary Integration Advisory Board (IAB) to advise the Board on the Health Agency's impact on ongoing Departmental activities and operations, and on achieving the County's health-related priorities.

Recognizing the value and necessity of multidisciplinary perspectives in this integration, the composition of the IAB was specified to include representatives from the Mental Health Commission, Public Health Commission, Hospital and Health Care Delivery Commission, Commission on Alcohol and Other Drugs, and the Commission on HIV; discipline specific consumers; and Departmental labor unions. The absence of representation for at-risk children, youth and their families is pronounced.

Vulnerable children, youth and their families, particularly those involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, face a host of challenges and have complex, nuanced needs. Los Angeles County has often failed to adequately meet many of these needs, as evidenced by recent litigation, media scrutiny and the County's own internal analysis.

For example, the June 30, 2015 *Response to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Regarding Possible Creation of a Health Agency* report specifically identifies children in foster care and transitional age youth as groups significantly impacted by major health related service gaps and listed these deficiencies as part of the rationale for a model of integrated health services delivery.

The Commission notes and commends the Health Agency's inclusion of improving "*..the County's ability to link vulnerable children, including those currently in foster care, and Transitional Age Youth (TAY) to comprehensive health services.*" among its strategic priorities.

While, the recognition of the needs of vulnerable children and youth in the Health Agency's founding framework is promising and consistent with the County's overall health-related priorities, it is not enough. Recent history has shown that without focused advocacy, vulnerable children and youth can be overseen, while simultaneously having their needs overlooked.

The Board has made clear its unwavering dedication to the health, safety and well-being of children and youth in the County of Los Angeles. For many of them, health, safety and well-being can only be achieved through services and programs currently administered by DMH, DPH and DHS. Given the magnitude of the impact that the Health Agency will have on the lives of those at highest risk, it is imperative that these children, youth and their families have a voice and be represented on the IAB as it carries out its mandate from the Board.

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c: Chief Executive Officer  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Director, Department of Mental Health  
Director, Department of Health Services  
Director, Department of Public Health  
Children's Deputies